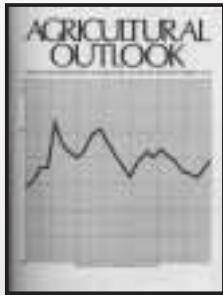


Ring in the New

Agricultural Outlook Bows Out with December Issue

As the year ends, Agricultural Outlook ends a 27-year run and makes way for a new magazine that USDA's Economic Research Service (ERS) will unveil in February 2003.



The AO Mission

Launched in June 1975, *Agricultural Outlook* combined the functions of a small ERS monthly newsletter (*Agricultural Outlook Digest*) and two quarterly reports covering demand, prices, and farm income. The magazine format accommodated discussion of "what is happening and why it is happening" in the agricultural sector. AO was also to be

the vehicle for providing summary data that were not all being published monthly.

Agricultural Outlook has traditionally specialized in several core issues—commodity outlook, as well as developments in the trade arena and farm income. A particular strength of AO has been its coverage of agricultural and trade policy, presenting complex issues in compact articles. It also regularly included overviews of the farm and general economy.



The Interim and the Internet

As policy concerns broadened, so did the range of issues addressed in the pages of AO. Articles on the environment, rural America, and food safety and quality became more frequent over the years. But even as the menu of topics expanded, AO continued to focus on its core issues.

The advent of the Internet offered potential for reaching a wider audience, and at the same time diminished the urgency of delivering a monthly printed magazine. Since 1996, AO has been available on the internet in pdf format. The Economic Research Service now produces virtually all its regular commodity and farm-sector outlook reports (with accompanying text and tables) as electronic publications. All ERS products are accessible on the agency's website, and a number of key reports, analysis, and data are available on the web *only*. In short, the internet has become the principal medium for delivering ERS information and data.



December 1996,
first available in pdf on the web

New ERS Magazine to Debut in February 2003

The new ERS flagship publication will appear both in print and on the internet, five times annually. Its "beat" will be the full range of ERS research and analysis. It will replace all three current ERS magazines—*Agricultural Outlook*, *FoodReview*, and *Rural America*. Food safety and nutrition, natural resources, and rural development will get equal billing with agriculture, trade, and policy.

Each issue of the new magazine will be a window on ERS work, offering a sample of topics from across the spectrum of the agency's program. The internet edition, to be updated with new articles and data between scheduled publication dates, will link readers directly to more detailed analysis on specific topics covered in the magazine. Data currently published in the AO appendix tables will be available on the ERS website and updated 10 times per year.

The new magazine will support the ERS goal of delivering reliable, relevant information targeted to decision makers in the public and private sectors, and will educate readers about the breadth and depth of the agency's work.

To find out more:

Watch for further details on the ERS website www.ers.usda.gov

If you have specific questions about the new magazine, contact: Sheila Sankaran at (202) 694-5010 or sankaran@ers.usda.gov